

# UNTOLD

STORY LEADS FROM MONTANA



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## Go Beyond the Fires—Rediscover Montana



*Boulder Complex Fire*

**Now that Montana's fires are off the national headlines and the smoke has cleared, the question remains, is Montana a good place to visit?**

**D**espite the most significant and certainly the most dramatic fire season in Montana's history, the "Last Best Place" is alive and thriving. Montana is a big state, 93 million acres, yet only 1% of the state's majestic landscape was affected by fire. The majority of Montana's vast mountain ranges, rolling plains, pristine rivers, guest ranches, resorts, towns and cities escaped unharmed by this act of Mother Nature.

Fires are a part of the natural life cycle in the forests of the northern

Rockies, and forest recovery has already begun to take shape in Montana's forests. But one only has to look at the Yellowstone National Park fires of 1988 to realize that fire breathes new life into our natural ecosystems.

"It has been an exhilarating experience to watch the regeneration process over the past twelve years," says Cheryl Matthews, Assistant Chief of Public Affairs at Yellowstone National Park. "Almost immediately after the fires,

**...fire breathes  
new life into our  
natural ecosystems.**

you could walk through an area and see lodgepole seedlings—now very well established and abundant. New vistas were opened up. Many flowering plants—such as fireweed and lupine—were especially abundant the first few years after the fires." Matthews adds that since the fires, there are even more educational opportunities to share with the public. "We all grew up with Smokey Bear and the idea that any fire is bad, but in many conversations with the public since 1988, they have voiced their understanding on how important and necessary fire is to the ecosystem."

Mother Nature will be Montana's special guest this coming year. Why not pay her a visit for a trip of a lifetime.

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# A Quick Cure for the Winter Blues

**Got cabin fever? If so, Montana has some relief for you near Yellowstone National Park in the town of Cooke City.**

Situated at the far northeast entrance of the park, this community of about 75 winter residents enjoys perhaps the longest winter sports season in the state.

"Cooke City is a unique location compared to some of the other places in Montana, because we are kind of isolated here. There is only one way in and one way out in the winter months," says Boyd Bernard, Cooke City chamber president. Coming from the west, motorists drive a 52-mile stretch of road from Gardiner, Montana, through the northern portion of the park. During the summer, Cooke City can be accessed from the east by driving the spectacular Beartooth Highway or U.S. Highway 212 from Red Lodge, Montana.



*Snowmobiling at Daisy Pass, north of Cooke City.*

But what some may see as isolation, others view as an ideal time to discover the backcountry. One popular way to see this spectacular area is aboard a snowmobile. "Cooke City is always picked as one of the top ten places to snowmobile in the United States and Canada," explains Bernard. He adds that one thing you can depend on in Cooke City is snow. Snowmobile trails in the area climb up to 10,000 feet.

However, snowmobiling isn't the only thing to do here. Snowmobilers share this majestic winter scene with backcountry skiers and snowboard enthusiasts alike. In fact, the entire town comes together each April to host a ski festival that benefits the Southwest Montana Avalanche Center in Bozeman. Ready to beat your winter blues? Log onto [www.wintermt.com](http://www.wintermt.com) for an entire listing of winter fun.

## Call of the Wild



*Montana's alternative mode of transportation.*

Admit it. After reading "The Call of the Wild" in high school you secretly yearned to hitch a team of dogs and mush your way across the snowy tundra. Yearn no more. When it comes to dog sled adventure Montana is top dog.

"Most people that come on these dog

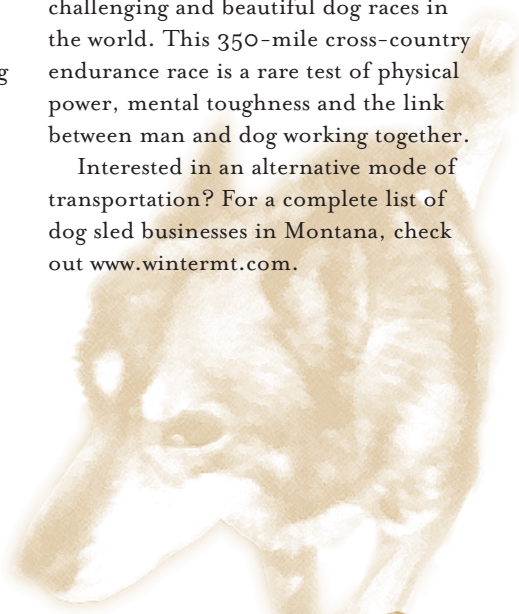
sled trips seem to like getting out in the backcountry and experiencing the quiet," says Bill Wellman, owner of the Whitetail Ranch and Snowcrest Sled Dog Adventures. "A lot of people think they will hear dogs barking the entire trip, but the reality is once they start running all you can hear is the swish of the dogs and oftentimes you'll see the tracks of elk and wolf."

Wellman says his clients can experience an hour or half-day ride, or for the more adventurous types there are overnight programs where they learn to handle their own team of dogs.

However, if you are the type who would rather heel than mush, Montana hosts two major dog sled races, the Seeley-Lincoln 100/200 race and the Race to the Sky. The Seeley-Lincoln race, which takes place January 27-29, 2001, emphasizes dog care, not speed,

and it is a qualifier for the Iditarod and the Yukon Quest dog sled races. The Race to the Sky, set for February 9-14, 2001, is recognized as one of the most challenging and beautiful dog races in the world. This 350-mile cross-country endurance race is a rare test of physical power, mental toughness and the link between man and dog working together.

Interested in an alternative mode of transportation? For a complete list of dog sled businesses in Montana, check out [www.wintermt.com](http://www.wintermt.com).





# A Battle Remembered

125th Commemoration of the Battle of the Little Bighorn

Standing on a hilltop in southeast Montana, one can leave the hustle and bustle of today's lifestyle and imagine the sights and sounds that occurred on a hot June 25th day in the year 1876. This was the day when two cultures clashed and history recorded the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

One hundred twenty five years ago, Lt. Col.

George A. Custer and the 7th Cavalry were overwhelmed by thousands of Northern Plains Indians, led by Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse and other war chiefs. The Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, near Hardin, Montana, marks the spot where approximately 360 U.S. soldiers, Army personnel and Indian warriors died.

Today, in nearby Garryowen, Montana, site of Sitting Bull's camp, is the Custer Battlefield Museum. This museum houses unique historical articles including Tom Custer's (brother of George) revolver, a warrior's necklace with a lodged bullet, and the only pair of cavalry boots found intact on the battlefield.



The museum's most significant feature is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which was dedicated on the 50th anniversary commemorating the battle. This tomb of a cavalry soldier from the battle is the only gravesite dedicated outside of a national cemetery. This June, the museum will unveil a memorial wall featuring statues of both Custer and Sitting Bull representing "peace through unity."

According to the National Park Service, the Battle of the Little Bighorn continues to fascinate people around the world. For most, it has come to illustrate a part of what Americans know as their western heritage. Heroism and suffering, brashness and humiliation, victory and defeat, triumph and tragedy—these are the things people come here to ponder.

For more information on the battle or its 125th commemoration, call the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument at (406) 638-2621 or the Custer Battlefield Museum at (406) 638-2000.

## 50 Years of Mud!

One would imagine that Archie Bray never outgrew the joy of that simple childhood pastime of playing in the mud. That mud turned to clay and into a brick business venture when he inherited the Western Clay Manufacturing Company in Helena in 1931. But it was Bray's love of art and pottery that would become his ongoing legacy. Fifty years ago, Bray established a nonprofit educational center where ceramic artists could work and study. Today, the Archie Bray Foundation is a world-renowned center for ceramic arts.



The center has several components. First and foremost the Bray is known for its residency program. Artists from around the world



apply for residencies; those accepted spend three months to two years developing their craft and teaching those in the community the art of pottery. Artist or not, the Bray is a wonderful place to discover. Visitors can roam the grounds on self-guided walking tours, which feature a diverse mix of ceramic displays; purchase pottery at the center's gallery; attend artist lectures; or enjoy the yearly "Brickyard Bash," a celebration of music, food and dance.

To mark their anniversary, the Bray has scheduled a celebration June 21-23, 2001 entitled 2001: Clay Odyssey, complete with exhibitions, demonstrations, an auction and symposium. Dig into the Bray's website at [www.archiebray.org](http://www.archiebray.org) or contact the foundation at (406) 443-3502 for more information.

## Mermaids of the High Plains

Ah, Montana in the winter: the palm trees and thatched roof of the beach hut rustle in a gentle breeze while you sip a Mai Tai and contemplate the mermaid splashing in the turquoise pool. Wait a minute...mermaid? Montana? This can't possibly be Montana. But it is, at a kitschy Great Falls lounge known as the Sip 'n Dip, a place where "Gilligan's Island meets the Twilight Zone," says Sandra Johnson, manager of the lounge

and the O'Haire Motor Inn.

The Sip 'n Dip is a time capsule of days past. It is a classic 1960s tiki lounge with yellow Naugahyde booths and a bamboo-and-grass ceiling.

Piano lounge music

has been tickled out for the past 36 years by Pat Spoonheim, providing the perfect atmosphere in which to "Sip" the tropical concoction of your choice.

Then there's the pool, the "Dip" portion of the experience. Two huge underwater windows behind the bar reveal the depths of the heated indoor lagoon: frolicking grounds for mermaids and the like. Some mermaids and mermen are hired by the lounge; others have less formal arrangements. Local lore has it that through the years patrons have been treated to impromptu swimming exhibitions performed by a diversity of mermaids, such as airline stewardesses and women softball players.

The Sip 'n Dip is located in the O'Haire Motor Inn, which is a time capsule in its own right. The inn and lounge were unveiled in 1961 by the O'Haire brothers, who were inspired to create the lounge in the image of a recent visit to the tropics. Promoted by the slogan, "Something to sip while you watch 'em dip," the lounge is still a comfortable place where young and old alike slip into a different era.

There's no need to book a ticket to Tahiti, just head north and drink in the "Tiny Bubbles" at the Sip 'n Dip.

For more details call (406) 454-2141 or dip into their website at [www.ohairemotorinn.com](http://www.ohairemotorinn.com).



## DECEMBER

- I Christmas Stroll—Lewistown, 538-5436
- I Christmas Stroll—Butte, 782-1605
- I Conrad Christmas Stroll—Conrad, 278-7791
- I Christmas Stroll—Great Falls, 453-6151
- I Night Of Lights—Columbia Falls, 892-2480
- I Powell County Christmas Stroll—Deer Lodge, 846-2094 or 846-3399
- I Annual Christmas Parade—Parade of Lights—Wolf Point, 653-2012
- I Christmas Stroll—Billings, 259-5454
- I Christmas in Paradise—Livingston, 222-0850
- I Christmas Tree Lighting—Superior, 822-4891
- I-2 Christmas Comes To Life and Festival of Trees—Libby, 293-4167
- I-2 Christmas Stroll—Red Lodge, 446-1718 or 446-1720
- 2 Christmas Stroll—Bozeman, 586-4008
- 2 9th Annual Old-Fashioned Christmas Fair—Livingston, 222-4185
- 2 Holiday Stroll—Missoula, 543-4238
- 2 Christmas Stroll—Stanford, 566-2633
- 2 Holiday Stroll, Artwalk & Tree Lighting Ceremony—Bigfork, 837-5888
- 2-3 Kick-Out-The-Kinks Benefit Ski Race—Essex, 888-5700
- 3 Christmas To Remember—Laurel, 628-4508
- 3 MonDak Ethnic Christmas Celebration—Sidney, 482-3500
- 3 Victorian Christmas At Grant-Kohrs Ranch—Deer Lodge, 846-2070
- 3 Original Governor's Mansion Christmas Tour—Helena, 444-4710
- 4 Christmas Stroll Parade of Lights—Malta, 654-1776
- 4 West Shore Holidayfest—Lakeside, 844-3880
- 7 Christmas Light Parade—Columbus, 322-4505
- 7 Annual Christmas Art & Craft Sale—Gardiner, 848-7107
- 8 Whitefish Christmas Stroll—Whitefish, 862-3501
- 8 Festival Of Lights—Belgrade, 388-1616
- 8 Yule Night on Broadway—Philipsburg, 859-3236 or 859-3353
- 8 Christmas Stroll—Miles City, 232-2890
- 8-10 Gun and Hunting Trophy Show—Bozeman, 586-6179
- 9 Townsend Christmas Stroll—Townsend, 266-3333
- 17 North Pole Stroll—Ennis, 682-7687
- 23 Anaconda Snowmobile Club Fun Run—Anaconda, 563-2918
- 23-30 Christmas Eve Festivities—Big Sky, 995-5000

- 23-30 Holiday Candlelight Tours of Lewis and Clark Caverns—Three Forks, 287-3541 or 287-3032
- 24 Christmas Eve Torchlight Parade With Santa—Whitefish, 862-2900
- 30 Snowmobile Poker Run—Lincoln, 362-4335 or 362-4078
- 30-31 Root Beer Classic—Polebridge, 881-2909
- 31 Torchlight Parade & Fireworks Display—Marysville, 449-3746
- 31 First Night Missoula—Missoula, 549-4755
- 31 New Year's Eve Fireworks Display and Celebration—Big Sky, 995-5000
- 31-1/1 Charlie Russell Chew-Choo New Year's Eve Train—Lewistown, 538-5436

## JANUARY

- I Year 2001 Flathead Lake Polar Bear Plunge—Bigfork, 837-5018 or 837-6096
- 6-7 Annual Ski Fest—Essex, 888-5700
- 12-13 Ag Days and Trade Show—Sidney, 433-1206
- 12-14 22nd Annual Montana Pro Rodeo Circuit Finals—Great Falls, 727-8115
- 13 Tele Fair at Big Sky Resort—Big Sky, 995-5000
- 18-20 MAGIE MT Agricultural and Industrial Expo—Great Falls, 761-7600
- 19-28 Seeley Lake Area Winterfest—Seeley Lake, 677-2880
- 20-21 Snow Boss Snocross Race—Haugan, 678-4242
- 21-23 Women's and Men's Ski Workshops—Whitefish, 862-2909
- 26 Micro Brew Review and Cool Dog Ball—Helena, 442-3263
- 27-29 The Seeley-Lincoln 100/200 Dog Sled Race—Seeley Lake, 677-3016

## FEBRUARY

- I-28 Northern Rocky Mountain Winter Games—Red Lodge, 252-8770
- 2 Cowtown Beef Breeders Show, Craft Expo & Ag Trade Show—Miles City, 232-2890
- 2-4 Northern Rodeo Association Finals—Billings, 252-1122
- 2-4 Whitefish Winter Carnival—Whitefish, 862-3501
- 3 Chocolate and Valentine Fair—Helena, 443-5291
- 3 13th Annual \$1,000 Super Poker Ride—Haugan, 678-4242
- 3-4 Snowboard Jam—Missoula, 549-9777
- 3-4 Montana Powder 8's Championship—Bozeman, 586-1518
- 3-11 Frost Fever/Winterfest—Missoula, 523-2754
- 3-31 Winternational XIV Sports Festival—Butte, 723-3177

- 4-18 22nd Annual Juried Exhibit—Miles City, 232-0635
- 9-10 Chocolate Festival—Anaconda, 563-2422
- 9-14 Race To The Sky Sled Dog Race—Helena, 442-4008
- 10 Moonlight Snowmobile Poker Run—Lincoln, 362-4335 or 362-4078
- 10 Annual Winterfest—Lakeside, 844-3715 or 844-3981
- 13-18 Montana Winter Fair—Bozeman, 585-1397
- 15-17 Montana Agri-Trade Exposition—Billings, 245-0404
- 15-17 Billings Home and Garden Show/Health & Fitness Expo—Billings, 245-0404
- 17 Ice Fishing Tournament—Glasgow, 228-2222
- 17-19 Northern Division Freestyle Competition—Missoula, 549-9777
- 22-24 Glendive Agri-Trade Exposition—Glendive, 365-5601
- 23-24 Jimmie Heuga Snow Express—Big Sky, 995-2090 or 995-5895
- 23-25 Snowbowl Cup Gelande Championship—Missoula, 549-9777
- 24 Wine and Food Festival—Great Falls, 761-1900
- 24-25 Wild West Shred O'fest Snowboard Competition—Bozeman, 586-1518
- 24-25 Masters Northern Division Championships—Whitefish, 862-2900
- 25-27 Special Olympics Winter Games—Whitefish, 268-6859

For a complete list of events, see us at [visitmt.com](http://visitmt.com)

## FROM MONTANA

The diversity of events, places and people in Montana is almost as wide as the state itself. We hope to give you a taste of that diversity with this quarterly newsletter. In addition, my office offers these services to editors, writers and producers.

### Visual Materials

Color slides, 8" x 10" B/W photos and stock video footage are available for editorial use.

### Writer/Photographer Referrals

We can put you in contact with many of Montana's most talented and experienced freelance writers and photographers.

### Editorial Copy/Calendar of Events

We can provide background information or editorial copy for many subjects. We also maintain a calendar of events for the entire state.

### Individual Attention

If you need the latest vacation guide and road map of Montana, a liaison with other government agencies or detailed information to fit a specific story angle, we're here to assist you.

Mary Boyle, Publicity Coordinator